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MINUTES OF PVTA'S  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
November 18, 2020

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Advisory Board Meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 12:00 P.M. remotely in accordance with the Governor's State of Emergency Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, Section 20, relieving from the requirement of section 20 of chapter 30A that it conduct its meetings in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, permitting a public body to allow remote participation by all members.

	<u>Present (44.48 votes)</u>	<u>Not Present (17.60 votes)</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo	
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter	
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary	
Chicopee	Steve Huntley	
East Longmeadow	Danell Tavella	
Easthampton		Brendan Rogers
Granby		Glen Sexton
Hadley		David Moskin
Hampden	Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke		Mayor Alex Morse
Leverett		Peter D'Errico
Longmeadow	Mark Gold	
Ludlow	Tony Goncalves	
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz	
Palmer		Barbara Barry
Pelham		Karen Willard-Ribeiro
South Hadley		Michael Sullivan
Springfield	Tasheena Davis	
Sunderland		Geoff Kravitz
Ware	John Carroll	
West Springfield	Jim Czach	
Westfield	Peter Miller	
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord	
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell	
ADA Representative		Vacant
Rider Representative		Patrick Burke

A quorum of 31.05 vote being present, Chairman of the Advisory Board, Mayor David Narkewicz, called the remote meeting of PVTA's Advisory Board to order at 12:02 PM; majority vote of 44.48 present.

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if any members of the public would like to make a public comment. No public comments were made.

## 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve the meeting minutes from the September 23, 2020 Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Miller/Huntley) to approve the meeting minutes from the September 23, 2020 Regular Advisory Board Meeting.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to approve the minutes.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Danell Tavella		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow	Tony Goncalves		
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz		
Palmer			
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield	Tasheena Davis		
Sunderland			
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield	Jim Czach		
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		

Motion passed by a vote of 44-0, 15-0.

## 4. APPROVAL OF 2021 ADVISORY BOARD MEETING DATES

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve the 2021 Advisory Board meeting schedule with all meetings taking place on a Wednesday at 12:00pm:

1. January 20, 2021
2. March 24, 2021
3. May 19, 2021
4. June 23, 2021
5. August 18, 2021
6. September 22, 2021
7. November 17, 2021

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (O’Leary/Squindo) to approve the 2021 Advisory Board meeting schedule as presented.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to approve the 2021 Advisory Board meeting schedule.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O’Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Danell Tavella		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow	Tony Goncalves		
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz		
Palmer			
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield	Tasheena Davis		
Sunderland			
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield	Jim Czach		
Westfield	Peter Miller		
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord		
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell		

Motion passed by a vote of 44-0, 15-0.

## 5. **DIRECTOR OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT**

Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations reported the following:

Fixed Route systemwide ridership continues to remain stable although at much lower numbers in percentage terms when compared to the previous year. While the number of riders continues to remain stable at approximately 82,000 per week, ridership will not likely approach the level seen in

July for some time. Most area schools, including Springfield and Holyoke, and many colleges and universities in the area are conducting most classes remotely. Until such time as in-person instruction resumes, we are unlikely to see significant increases in ridership.

Performance-Based system review: Considering the impacts of Covid on our system, a review of systemic performance and need will be conducted moving forward. To fully assess this, we will need to think strategically in terms of what parts of the system demonstrate need and which parts may not; while it is important for PVRTA and stakeholders to analyze service needs, we must also consider the economic and environmental justice concerns of our region. We will need to balance the short term challenges with an informed understanding of where we think ridership is likely to rebound in the near term and over time while also considering if there are areas that could potentially need more service as a result of the changing economic environment. This review will include consideration of staffing at all levels to ensure that PVRTA's system is running as efficiently as possible to meet all stakeholders' needs.

Fare Review: In April of 2018, the Board approved PVRTA's first fare increase since 2008. Fares increased from \$1.25 to \$1.50 on July 1, 2018. At that time, the Board also voted to review the fare structure at three-year intervals with a potential fare increase of between 5 and 25%. To support the Board's decision-making process around a potential fare change for FY 22, with assistance from PVPC, we will be conducting a fare equity analysis over the next few months. The study will also include examining the benefits and disadvantages of offering student fares, the impacts of offering a low-income fare and examining the impacts of fare reduction/fare elimination.

Paratransit ridership continues to be impacted by the pandemic. Overall, ridership has continued to increase since the height of the pandemic. However, while ridership has shown steady double-digit percentage increases, the increase rate seems to have slowed.

Dial-A-Ride service continues to operate with expanded hours, operating Monday through Friday from 6:30 AM through 5:00 PM.

In Northampton, we are currently providing a modified "shuttle" type service that will provide Dial-A-Ride service for the seniors in Northampton to access shopping, medical and other trips within Northampton. This service is being provided in lieu of service the Senior Center provides due to Covid limitations. This also provides an opportunity for PVRTA to pilot demand response same day service for Northampton seniors between 7:30am and 3:30pm, Monday through Friday.

## **6. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Administrator, Sandra Sheehan, reported the following:

Massachusetts has mandated face coverings, imposed new restrictions on gatherings and limited the hours of some public-facing businesses as officials attempt to control rising cases of Covid. At PVRTA we have seen an increase in the number of employees that have tested positive. These positives can be linked to social activities outside of work. In an effort to reduce the spread amongst the workforce, PVRTA instituted weekly on-site testing and requires all employees to wear a mask while at work even while observing proper social distancing. PVRTA has also increased its informational campaign to include the new requirements for public spaces and to reiterate the need to wear masks all the time while riding PVRTA vehicles.

The House has released their budget. Chairman Strauss and Representative Peak introduced Amendment #194 which asks for the budget of \$90.5M to be fully allocated to the RTAs not divided and \$3.5M be distributed by MassDOT as discretionary grants. The recommendation was made

because it is too late in the fiscal year to determine the discretionary grant program, evaluate submissions and award the grants. The full funding level should be provided to RTAs for service and Covid related expenses. Last March, the RTAs agreed upon a formula for distribution of state assistance and presented it to MassDOT. The formula provides a performance-based distribution to the RTAs that recognizes four important funding elements: Sustainable performance levels as reflected in MassDOT /RTA MOUs; supports ridership as the dominant performance measure for any additional funding; recognizes potential riders and unmet need by including population served; and reflects the costs and challenges of providing service in rural and geographically large service areas by including service area. This amendment was approved. It is our hope, the Senate approves the same budget language. On Thursday, the Senate Ways and Means released their FY21 budget at \$94M including \$3.5M to be distributed by MassDOT as discretionary grants. Amendments to the Senate budget were due Friday and the budget debate is expected to commence on Tuesday. A state budget may be finalized for the end of the month.

PVTA has been awarded \$680,000 funds through the Helping Obtain Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE) Program. The goal of the grant is to review historical and existing transit conditions in order to inform the design of a sustainable system for future travel needs in the Pioneer Valley.

The Spirit of Springfield recognized frontline employees at Bright Nights on November 30<sup>th</sup>. PVTA staff was able to drive thru Bright Nights free of charge by showing their employee badge.

Twenty new buses have been delivered. We were also awarded eight additional electric buses. These buses can hold a longer charge of about 300 miles (200-250 weather pending). Six depot electric charges have been installed at Cottage Street.

We have issued a purchase order for eleven additional buses to replace fleet buses based on funding available.

Fifteen 2011 buses are being overhauled to add about five years to the life of the vehicle. These vehicles are expected to run to 2026 after the overhaul completion. Five of the buses will be completed by June 30, 2021.

## **7. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER REPORT**

Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Lisa Seymour, reported the following:

Included in your Board packet is the overall budget which is broken out by department.

The variance in the budget is from the approved FY21 Budget in May without Covid assumptions to the Amended FY21 Budget today. These figures are based from the ending FY20 and the first quarter of FY21 financials. These figures include costs associated with the Covid pandemic and makes assumptions that take into consideration further possible developments of Covid.

Without the CARES Act, PVTA could not sustain full service. We are predicting that we will use \$12 million dollars of the CARES Act funding for FY21. \$7.4 million dollars in operating funds and \$5 million dollars in capital costs for Covid expenses.

### **Revenue:**

Farebox revenue has a decrease of 45%. The Farebox line item includes cash, passes and any revenue paying a fare. This includes the STCC passes that are purchased throughout the year as well as Springfield and Holyoke School Trippers. This figure reflects an assumption that the schools will return to on campus learning in the spring. This budget is somewhat conservative, assuming that the

schools are in person. If schools don't return to on campus learning, the farebox revenue will reflect that as the year progresses.

Advertising has decreased by 25%. Marketing/Advertising is unfortunately the first to go during difficult times. Advertising that normally target students are reluctant to renew contracts and many businesses have pulled their advertising due to Covid shutdowns and limitations.

Interest, Insurance Recoveries and Misc. stayed about the same. This includes interest on our bank accounts, insurance recoveries from accidents and other miscellaneous revenue such as ID pictures.

Operating Subsidy Other: This line item changed significantly due to The Loop not operating during Covid and is not expected to resume for FY21. Also due to reduced college specific service the subsidy for Five Colleges and UMass are not expected to be collected. Both provide a subsidy for service above and beyond the local assessments.

Federal Operating Grants: This grant is federal money that is used to support our operating budget specifically for preventative maintenance of our fleet and ADA service based on a formula. Due to reduced miles and ADA, it is anticipated that we will be more in line with where we were for FY20. This line item is reduced to reflect that figure.

State Contract Assistance: Amount is assumed to be at the level of the Governor's Budget.

#### Expenses:

Administration: This line item includes many things. Wages and Fringe are included in this line item as well as legal, public relations, janitorial, security, utilities, supplies, equipment and maintenance. The increase of 4% is based on a few different line items. The audit line was an oversight and was based on a half year and was adjusted to cover a full year. Public relations increased due to information dissemination as to keeping the public informed during this pandemic is crucial. Legal increased significantly due to additional legal expenses directly associated with Covid such as counsel on OSHA, CDC requirements, Families First Act, Governors Orders, testing, quarantine etc. Janitorial increased due to added cleaning to facilities and transfer points as well as disinfecting common areas. Security also increased due to Covid concerns and incidents.

Fixed Route Service shows a slight increase. This service not only includes our management company, but it encompasses all our garages salaries and overhead which includes Springfield, Northampton and Amherst. Overhead includes utilities, security and janitorial among many others which have all increased due to Covid. Cost of service is anticipated to increase due to overtime of drivers and cleaning of the buses to ensure safety.

Please note that although there was some service reduction implemented due to Covid for FY20, the fixed route expenses were over budget by more than \$500,000 as presented in the audited financials. These expenses are related to maintaining the same workforce level, administrative leave due to quarantine, purchasing of PPE's, overtime to cover leave, overtime for cleaning and disinfecting the buses and vans and the need for additional cleaning and disinfecting to maintain a safe environment at all facilities.

The cost of the paratransit service is anticipated to come in lower than budget due to the senior centers and COA's not being opened as of yet.

Allocated Insurance shows a large increase from the approved budget while some policies stayed the same. Workers compensation decreased but some policies increased. The increase is due to a few factors. The 2840 building had over \$2 million dollars in improvements. Brokers had difficulty



having insurance companies bid due to the pandemic with the Covid unknowns. We assumed 20 new buses and 27 new vans. During Covid, disposal of vehicles was halted but now as the vehicles are disposed of and removed from the property, they can be removed from the policy. There are two diesel storage tanks that are not being used at our 2840 facility that increased our policy due to the age of the tanks and the risk that they may leak. Once they are removed, our policy will decrease. We are working with our environmental consultant to plan for removal of the tanks, but we currently do not have the funds to do so.

Allocated IT is expected to remain the same.

## 8. REPORT OF THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Doug Slaughter, Chairman of the Finance & Audit Committee, reported the following:

The committee met remotely Monday morning (November 16<sup>th</sup>). The committee received detailed reports on the Year-to-Date Budget to Actual for the first quarter and PVTA's FY21 Amended Budget.

The CFO went thru the FY21 Amended Budget by department. We knew when we approved the budget back in May that we would need to revisit and make amendments. The estimates for the amended budget are conservative on the income side and high on the expenses side. The committee voted to recommend approval of the FY21 Amended Budget to the Board.

The committee also voted to approve the meeting minutes of September 21, 2020 and accept the Year-to-Date Report.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to accept the report of the Finance & Audit Committee.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Squindo/Slaughter) to accept the report of the Finance & Audit Committee.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to accept the report of the Finance & Audit Committee.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Danell Tavella		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz		

Palmer	
Pelham	
South Hadley	
Springfield	Tasheena Davis
Sunderland	
Ware	John Carroll
West Springfield	Jim Czach
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell

Motion passed by a vote of 42.99, 14-0.

## 9. APPROVAL OF FY21 AMENDED BUDGET

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve and adopt PVTA's FY21 Amended Budget.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Slaughter) to approve and adopt PVTA's FY21 Amended Budget.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to approve and adopt PVTA's FY21 Amended Budget.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Danell Tavella		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			
Longmeadow	Mark Gold		
Ludlow			
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz		
Palmer			
Pelham			
South Hadley			
Springfield	Tasheena Davis		
Sunderland			
Ware	John Carroll		
West Springfield	Jim Czach		
Westfield	Peter Miller		



Motion passed by a vote of 42.99, 14-0.

## **10. NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz reported that there is no new business to discuss.

## **11. OLD BUSINESS**

Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations, asked to discuss the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) that the Advisory Board approved on March 25, 2020.

The Board has already approved the plan, but we are being required to revise the format to clearly identify the PTASP Safety Targets 2020 through June 20, 2021.

Safety Targets language approved March 25, 2020:

- Fatalities: The target number of fatalities for years CY 2019 is 353, down from an average of 364 fatalities for the years 2012–2016.
- Rate of Fatalities per 100 million VMT: The target fatality rate for years CY 2019 is 0.58, down from a 0.61 average for years 2012–2016.
- Serious Injuries: The target number of incapacitating injuries for CY2019 is 2801, down from the average of 3146 for years 2012–2016.
- Rate of Incapacitating Injuries per 100 million VMT: The incapacitating injury rate target for CY2019 is 4.37 per year, down from the 5.24 average rate for years 2012–2016.

Revised Safety Targets language:

- Fatality Rate: .0058 per million VMT or fatalities,
- Rate of incapacitating injuries: .0437 per million VMT
- Target fatalities: 0
- Target for incapacitating injuries: 0

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz stated that Mr. Burns is looking to have the Board approve the revised Safety Target language format in PVRTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan which lists out the Safety Targets separately rather than lists the Safety Targets as a group.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion from the Advisory Board to approve PVRTA's PTASP with the new formatting for the Safety Targets.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (Miller/O'Leary) to approve PVRTA's PTASP with the new formatting for the Safety Targets.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to approve PVRTA's PTASP with the new formatting for the Safety Targets.

Agawam

Yes  
Michael Squindo

No

Abstained

Amherst	Douglas Slaughter	
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary	
Chicopee	Steve Huntley	
East Longmeadow		Danell Tavella
Easthampton		
Granby		
Hadley		
Hampden	Becky Moriarty	
Holyoke		
Leverett		
Longmeadow	Mark Gold	
Ludlow		
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz	
Palmer		
Pelham		
South Hadley		
Springfield	Tasheena Davis	
Sunderland		
Ware	John Carroll	
West Springfield	Jim Czach	
Westfield	Peter Miller	
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord	
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell	

Motion passed by a vote of 41.45, 13-0 with 1 abstention.

## 12. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Squindo) to adjourn.

Chairman Mayor Narkewicz asked if the Board had any discussion. Hearing none; asked for a roll call vote to adjourn.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Agawam	Michael Squindo		
Amherst	Douglas Slaughter		
Belchertown	Brian O'Leary		
Chicopee	Steve Huntley		
East Longmeadow	Danell Tavella		
Easthampton			
Granby			
Hadley			
Hampden	Becky Moriarty		
Holyoke			
Leverett			

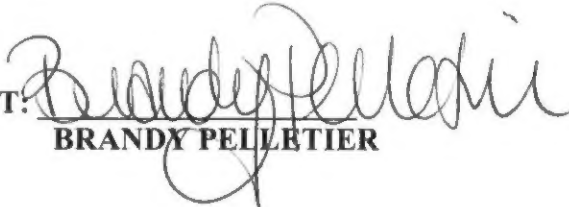
Longmeadow	Mark Gold
Ludlow	
Northampton	Mayor David Narkewicz
Palmer	
Pelham	
South Hadley	
Springfield	Tasheena Davis
Sunderland	
Ware	John Carroll
West Springfield	Jim Czach
Westfield	Peter Miller
Wilbraham	Paula Dubord
Williamsburg	J.M. Sorrell

Motion passed by a vote of 42.99, 14-0.

The meeting of the Advisory Board adjourned at 12:56 P.M.

**A TRUE RECORD**

ATTEST:

  
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Board Meeting packet:

- Roll Call Votes
- Regular Advisory Board Minutes of 9-23-2020
- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Budget to Actual
- FY21 Amended Budget

**MINUTES APPROVED ON: January 27, 2021**